

The Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for Tuesday, 26 October 1858 indicates that General Johnston was invited to move his troops from Camp Floyd to the Provo Bench:

A company of merchants and campfollowers have gone to establish a city on the Provo Bench to be called Centre City. It is reported that they have invited General Johnston to locate a military post there, and move in the spring with his troops.

Governor Cumming requested President Young to send men to occupy all the land. The president [Brigham Young] said he did not wish to interfere, but would let them build a city, it will be a long time first, unless they get the "Mormons" to build it for them; and then they would cheat them out of their pay; he would like them to get the apostates to build the city for them.

A military post was not established on Provo Bench. Eventually, Johnston's troops left Utah, and the Salt Lake City residents moved back to their homes. Because their settlement in Utah Valley was temporary, these people had little economic effect on the benchland area.

The Nauvoo Legion, which had been partially reorganized in Utah on 27 March 1852, used the bench for their military drills. Andrew Jenson, LDS Church historian, wrote in his autobiography:

In October 1870, I had my first experience in military training, a county military drill being held at Camp Burton, located on the so-called Dry Creek, on the Provo Bench, about four miles southeast of Pleasant Grove. About 4,000 men were gathered from different parts of Utah County, and the drill was carried out with strict discipline and order. This was a part of the annual drilling of the Nauvoo Legion. I rather enjoyed the exercises and at once felt a desire to train as a soldier and aspire to become an officer in that military organization. This, however, was not to be in my case, for

after two more annual drills, which I attended and enjoyed, orders were given by Acting Governor Shaffer of Utah for the "Mormons" to cease their military evolutions.

On 30 July 1870, Fort Rawlins, a temporary military fort was established on the bench two and one-half miles north of the Provo River. The military was stationed there to protect Provo citizens from Indians, but a permanent fort was never built. For several reasons, the temporary fort was closed down by June 1871.

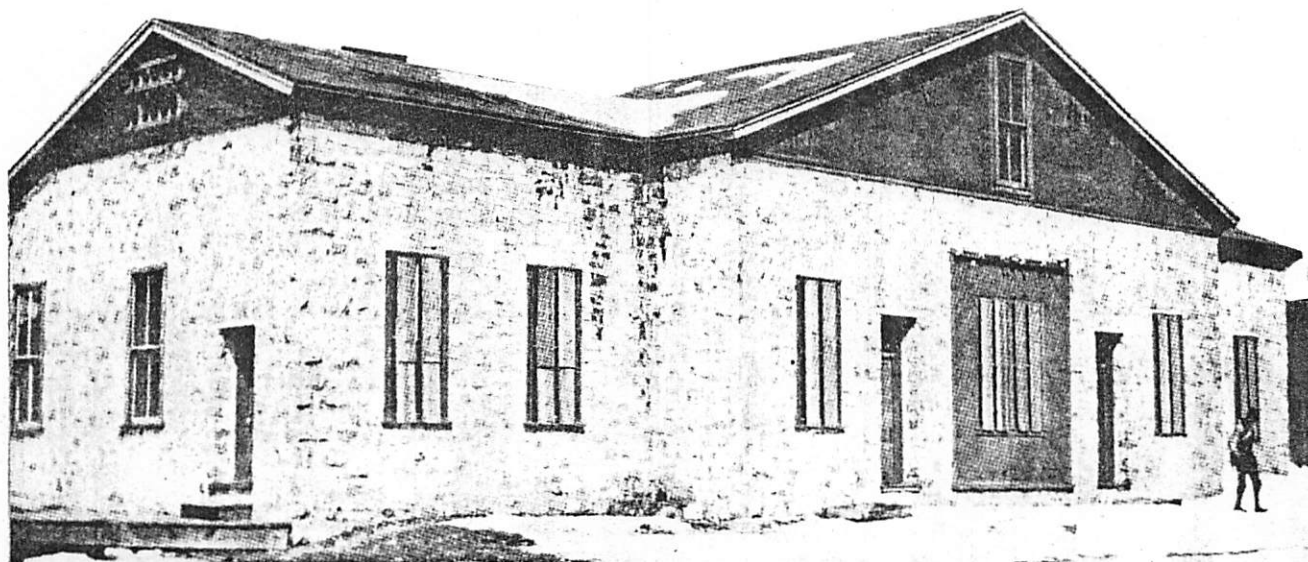
Fort Rawlins was undesirable from the viewpoints of the command and the soldiers. There was poor communication with higher command and the facilities were poor. Contempt from the townspeople worsened these problems to the point of open rebellion among some 20 of the 40 soldiers stationed at the fort.

On 22 September 1890, drunken soldiers marched prominent Provo men down West Main Street at gunpoint. Besides the verbal abuse inflicted on these men, property damage was incurred by other citizens whose houses were shot at by the passing soldiers.

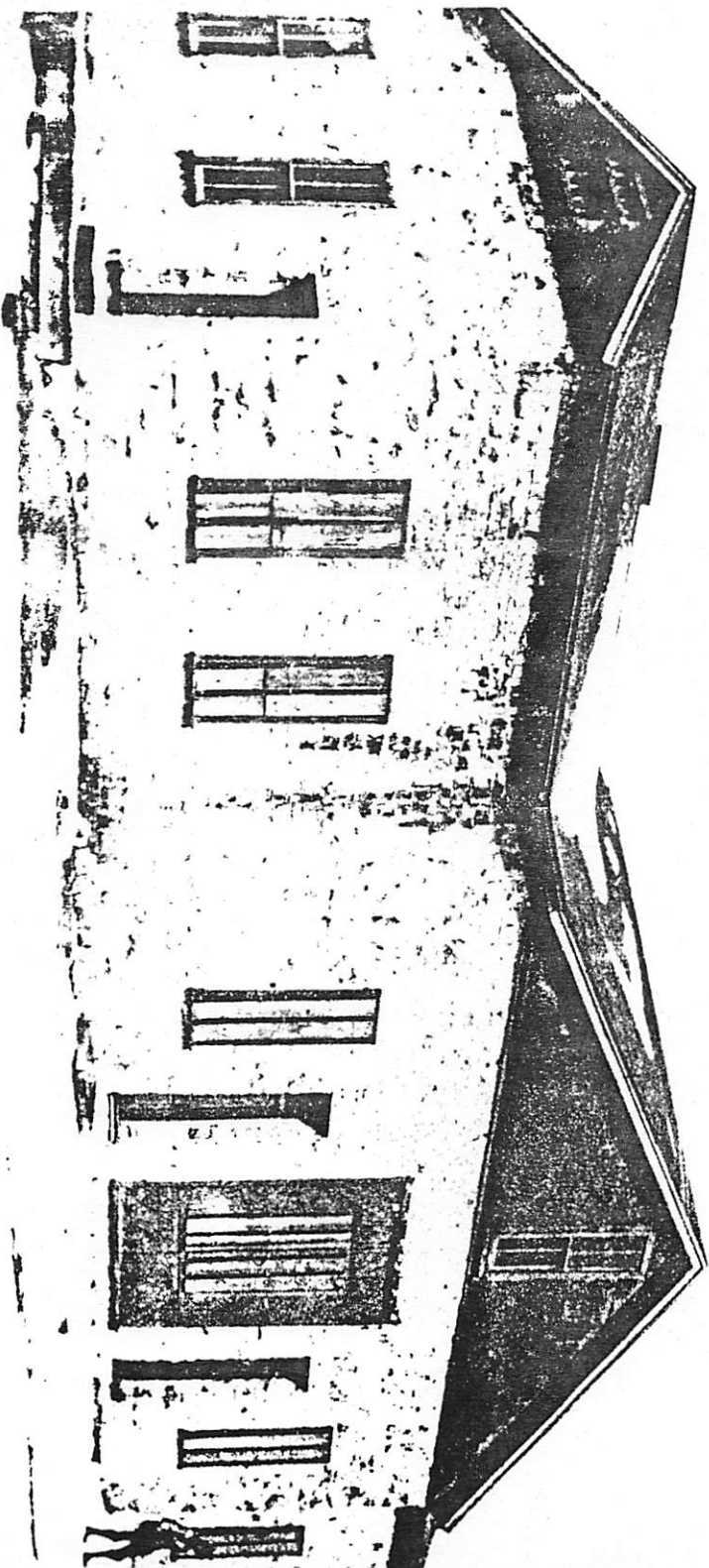
Because Fort Rawlins existed for such a short time, it had little economic effect on the benchland area.

HYDROELECTRIC POWER

In 1890, Mr. L. L. Nunn successfully built and operated the first industrial hydroelectric power plant, the Ames Plant, near Telluride, Colorado. It transmitted alternating current at high voltage three miles away. In 1894, he began looking for possible hydroelectric power sites farther west in the Rocky Mountains. He chose the Provo River as the site for



NUNN'S STATION, PROVO CANYON
Courtesy Utah Power and Light Company



Nunn's Station in Provo Canyon, Utah, now abandoned, was built by industry pioneer, L. L. Nunn, to furnish power for mines at Mercur, Utah. The first 44,000 volt line in America extended from this hydro plant to Mercur—thirty-two miles to the west.

the Nunn's Station which was operational in 1897. By the next year the turbine provided 750 kilowatts of power to a gold mine and a mill in Mercur, Utah, thirty-two miles away. This was a milestone in the history of electrical transmission because this electricity was being transmitted by the first 44,000-volt transmission line built in the United States.

In 1900, the Telluride Power Company was formed. The Nunn's Station was soon replaced by the Olmstead Plant which became operational in 1904. It supplied surrounding areas and increasingly distant areas (no farther than 50 miles away) with electricity.

The Olmstead Plant was unique in that it was equipped to provide on-the-job training in electrical



OLMSTEAD PLANT
Courtesy BYU Archives

engineering for its employees. Mr. L. L. Nunn conceived this company-employee relationship. His brother, Paul Nunn, directed the program, also used at other plants, that eventually became the Telluride Institute. The Telluride Association, as it was named in 1911, is presently seated at Cornell University. The impact, though, of that early program is remarkable. At the time, the Olmstead Plant offered the only competent training program in electrical engineering besides the program taught at Ohio State. Some young men from the bench area were trained under this two-year program and became outstanding engineers.

In 1912, Utah Power and Light Company was formed; it purchased the Telluride Power Company, which included the Olmstead Plant. This plant is still operated under the direction of Utah Power and Light Company.

TRANSPORTATION

State Street in Orem was originally established as part of the great corridor highway that linked Salt Lake City with Southern Utah and California. State Street opened for travel in the 1850's, was eight rods wide and ran between what is now 2000 South and 2000 North in Orem. What originally was a dusty, rutted, rocky road in the summer, and a muddy, sloshy road in the winter is now a paved, modern road that is part of U. S. Highway 91.

The transition from buggies and carriages to automobiles did not occur overnight on Provo Bench. The evolution of modern transportation was gradual, yet inevitable and helpful to the benchland. The creaky Model-T's and the fragile trucks that appeared early in the century on the bench can't compare with the cars and diesel trucks that now traverse Utah's highways, but they did increase trade with neighboring towns and cities.

Many roads were graveled in order to strengthen them. The old Provo Canyon Road was graveled in 1911-12. Early settlers hauled loads of rock from their benchland farms to gravel the old Canyon Road. The highway department crushed the rock to make the hard gravel. As transportation improved, trade and commercial activity increased.

By 1910, Provo Bench was becoming a prosperous agricultural community. Accessibility to outside markets inevitably required a railroad. Electrically driven railroads were fairly new, so it is understandable why in 1913 "newspapers of Utah were virtually unanimous in proclaiming the building of the Orem Railroad the biggest event of that year." The Salt Lake and Utah Railroad, or the Orem Line as it was called by many people, was a 67-mile electric rail line financed and constructed by A. J. Orem and Company under the direction of Walter C. Orem. The line from Salt Lake to Provo, which passed through Provo Bench, was opened for electric car service on 24 July, 1913. By 1917, the Orem Line extended from Salt Lake to Payson.

A railroad depot was eventually built in Orem, but because of highway improvements and increased use of automobiles in the 1920's, passenger business declined on the Orem Line. In the 1930's, the line went into receivership, and a foreclosure sale of all properties took place in the first few months of 1938.

A NEW NAME FOR THE BENCH

Some people on the bench recognized the need for an organization that would promote better business conditions. One day in April, 1914, Oscar H. Anderson, a salesman, rode on horseback to nearly every house on the bench trying to get residents to attend a commercial meeting to be held at Parcell's